

Current Events

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

In reading our daily papers it struck us that it would be by no means an unprofitable use of our current event page, to devote this issue to the "Queen's Speech." It is quite probable that many of our young readers have never yet read a "Speech from the Throne." We might just say that the "Speech from the Throne," is prepared by the Queen's ministers, or, in other words, the Government. It is customary, however, for the Cabinet to secure the Queen's approval of the matter contained in the "Speech."

At the opening of each session of Parliament the commoners are summoned to the House of Lords, when the "Speech" is read. It is considered as a sort of programme of the Government, containing not only a review of the political relations of the Empire, but also a forecast of the proposed legislation of the session.

This "Speech" should be read over thoughtfully as it contains matters about which we shall have occasion to write in future numbers. We shall soon have before us the "Speech from the Throne" at the opening of the Canadian Parliament.

The "Speech," as read by the Lord Chancellor, was as follows:—

My Lords and Gentlemen :

My relations with all of the other powers continue to be of a friendly character.

The appalling massacres which have taken place in Constantinople and other parts of the Ottoman dominions have called for the special attention of the powers to make the present condition of the Ottoman Empire the subject of special consultation by the representatives of the powers at Constantinople. The conferences of the six ambassadors to the Porte are still proceeding.

The action undertaken by the Khedive of Egypt against the Khalifa, with my approval and assistance, has been entirely successful. His forces, supported by my officers and troops, have won back the fertile Province of Dongola to civilization by operations which were conducted with remarkable skill, and the way has been opened for a further advance whenever such a step is judged to be desirable.

My Government has discussed with the United States, as a friend of Venezuela, the terms under which the pending questions of a disputed frontier between that Republic and British Guiana may be equitably submitted to arbitration. An arrangement has been arrived at with that Government, which will, I trust, effect an adjustment of the existing difficulties without exposing to risk the interests of any colonists who have established rights in the disputed territory.

ARBITRATION TREATY.

It is with much gratification that I have concluded a treaty for general arbitration with the President of the United States, by which I trust that all difficulties that may arise between us may be peacefully adjusted. I hope that this arrangement may have further value in commending to other powers the consideration of the principle by which the danger of war may be notably abated.

The rebellion in Matabeleland and Mashonaland has been repressed by the steadfastness and cour-

age of the settlers, reinforced by my troops and volunteers, both of the English and Dutch races. I deplore the loss of valuable lives which these operations have entailed.

The depressed condition of the sugar industry in the West Indian colonies has seriously affected their prosperity. I have appointed a commission to investigate the causes and, if possible, to suggest means of amelioration.

INDIAN FAMINE.

It is with much regret and with feelings of the deepest sympathy that I have heard that owing to the failure of the autumn rains, scarcity and famine affect a large portion of India. My Government in that country is making every effort to mitigate the suffering and lessen the calamity by the development of railways and irrigation works. The forethought given through a long series of years to the preparation of the most effective arrangements for alleviating distress caused by famine, make their task more hopeful than in the case of previous visitations. My people throughout my dominions at home and in India, have been invited to second with their liberality the exertions of the Government. Papers showing the extent of the famine and the measures taken to relieve the suffering will be laid before you.

A plague has also made its appearance in Bombay and Karachee, and, notwithstanding the precautions adopted by the local authorities, it shows no signs of decrease. I have directed my Government to take the most stringent measures for the eradication of the pestilence.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons :

The estimates of the year will be laid before you. While desirous of guarding against undue expenditure, I have felt that the present condition of the world will not permit you to depart from the spirit of prudent foresight in which you have during recent years provided for the defence of the empire.

PROJECTED LEGISLATION.

My Lords and Gentlemen :

A measure for the promotion of primary education by securing maintenance of voluntary schools will be laid before you, and, if time permits, you will be invited to consider further proposals for educational legislation.

It is desirable to make better provision for the compensation of working people who suffer from accidents, and a bill with that object in view will be submitted to you.

Your consent will be asked to provisions which, in the judgment of the military authorities, are required for the efficiency of military defences of the empire.

A bill will also be submitted to you to improve the arrangements for the water supply of the Metropolis.

In order to promote the interests of agriculture, which are of paramount importance in Ireland, you will be asked to consider a bill to establish a board of agriculture, and further legislative proposals will be brought before you, if the time at your disposal is sufficient for the purposes.

Bills admitting the evidence of accused persons, amending the law in respect of bills of sale and the registration of land, for revising the acts in respect of the formation of limited companies, an amendment to the agricultural holdings act in Great Britain, the exclusion of goods manufactured in prisons in other countries, the establishment of